

1931 FORD MODEL A PICKUP

1931 Ford Model A Pickup (chassis)

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Number made: 34,959

Engine, etc.: 4 cyl.; 200.5 cid; 103.5 in. wheelbase

Henry Ford shut down production of Model T's in June, 1927 so his plants could retool for the new Model A. Production didn't resume until December and the only Model A pickup available was an open cab type with side curtains of canvas and mica "windows" to keep the elements out.

A closed cab version of the pickup was released in August, 1928. It featured an all steel cab with roll-up door windows. Fenders, running boards, wheels, headlight buckets and the radiator grille were painted black on the vehicles, which came in either black or rock moss green. Some 26,171 pickups were produced for the 1928 model year.

In February, 1929, Ford released their 1929 Model A pickups with minor changes over the 1928 model. Exterior door handles were added to the open cab models and new exterior colors were offered.

The 1930 model year saw Ford redesigning all Model A's including the pickups. The cowl was smoothed out, fenders restyled, the hood line was raised and a taller, thinner radiator was used. Closed cab models had a sun visor over the windshield, a windshield that could be pivoted out from the bottom for cab ventilation, a new roof panel, and a cab that had more rounded corners on the back. Open cab versions had a new top that could be removed and, once removed, the windshield could be laid flat on top of the cowl. Even with these changes and more color choices, pickup production dropped to 48,378 vehicles during this Depression year.

For 1931, the last year of Model A production, Ford offered a larger pickup box and even more exterior colors. Offered in limited production was a Model A Deluxe Pickup for people who wanted something special. Ford offered a canopy top pickup for businesses. Other changes for 1931 included wider fenders, a higher hoodline, stainless steel radiator and headlamp shells (instead of nickel-plated), smaller wheels, higher steering ratio, standard vacuum wipers, and balloon tires. The pickups could do 60 mph, had a modern gearbox and electrical system, and stopped much better with mechanical brakes on all four wheels instead of just two.

Ford produced 29,545 pickups before production of the 1931 Model A trucks ceased in March, 1932.

Rumor had it in 1931 that Henry Ford was working on a V-8 to get ahead of Chevrolet's six and the new engine would be put in a new truck line that would replace the Model A based series. Privately, Henry Ford knew it was all over for four-cylinder cars and trucks and he was well along in designing the Model A's replacement.

In July, 1931, Ford laid off 75,000 workers and closed 25 of 36 U. S. factories until sales showed some improvement.

Ford introduced the V-8 engine in 1932 pickups.

Sources: Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805 -1942. Beverly Rae Kimes, et al. 3rd ed. Krause Publications, 1996.

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